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Examining the Representation of Slavery within Children's Literature

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Middle level teachers, at times, link historical content with relevant English literature in interdisciplinary units. Elementary teachers periodically employ history-themed literature during reading time. Interconnections between language arts and history are formed with developmentally appropriate literature for students. Historical misrepresentations, however, proliferate in children's literature and are concealed behind engaging narratives. Since literacy and historical thinking are essential skills, children's literature should be balanced within, not banished from, the classroom. Using America's peculiar institution of slavery as a reference point, this article examines children's literature, identifies almost a dozen areas of historical misrepresentation, and proffers rich primary source material to balance the various misrepresentations. We provide teachers with reason for caution when including such literature; but also model how to locate, use, and, at times, abridge primary source material within an elementary or middle level classroom. Such curricular supplements provide balance to engaging but historically-blemished children's literature and enable educators to attain the rigorous prescriptions of Common Core.

Key Words: Slavery, children's literature, historical thinking, primary source material, historical representation, methodology

Introduction

The Association for Middle Level Education strongly encourages teachers of young adolescents to incorporate interdisciplinary units (Vars, 1997). A sophisticated and integrated curricula provides students more opportunities to examine an event, concept, or issue from different angles (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Many academic benefits emerge from the committed and purposeful integration of, for instance, students reading Alex Haley's *Roots* in English as they study the Triangle Trade in world history and explore the concept of buoyancy in science (National Association for Core Curriculum, 2000). There is a noticeable dearth of research, however, that demonstrates the classroom manifestation of this theory.

There is also an absence of social studies content in elementary school curricula. In response to the changing landscape of education, many school districts have reduced the amount of time elementary level students spend with social studies and history content while increasing reading and literacy time (Fallace, Biscoe, & Perry, 2007; Holloway & Chiodo, 2009). Findings derived from case studies indicate teachers frequently position informal history-themed literature like biographies, narrative non-fiction, and historical fiction in space previously reserved for formal social studies curricula (Wilton & Bickford, 2012). This substitution appears prudent considering how state and national initiatives encourage intensive readings of informational texts within the English, language arts, history and social studies curricula beginning in lower elementary (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; National Council for the Social Studies, 2013; Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012).

Teachers' confidence in trade books, however, can have inadvertent negative consequences akin to those emergent within textbook-reliant classrooms.

Textbooks frequently contain conspicuous inaccuracies and unintentional historical misrepresentations (Loewen, 1995; Fitzgerald, 2009; Matusevich, 2006). The oversights and mistakes are derived from authors' carelessly quick construction of new editions and publishers' self-censorship to avoid perceptions of political bias (Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004; Loewen, 2010; Matusevich, 2006). Since the content is wide-ranging, superficially covered, and usually written at or above students' reading level, textbooks leave students unable to construct historical understandings (Lindquist, 2009; Wineburg, 2001). The dry, single-voice narratives unnecessarily exclude experts' disagreements, rendering students passive and disengaged (Drake & Brown, 2003; Wineburg & Martin, 2009). In short, textbooks are a mile wide, an inch deep, devoid of the intellectual disagreements, and replete with inaccurate and misrepresentative information, leaving young readers with intellectual backpacks overflowing with dubious, disconnected facts.

Unlike history textbooks, individual children's history-based trade books are rich in detail, narrow in coverage, and with readable, engaging narratives. Research examining the classroom appropriateness for the trade books indicates inconsistent historicity. Improvements appear in gender representations over the past two decades (Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010) while the presence of multiple forms of historical misrepresentations must not be overlooked (Powers, 2003; Short, 1997; Williams, 2009). Authors and teachers have made the argument that trade books are not textbooks and should not be held to the same standard of historical authenticity (Collins & Graham, 2001; Lathey, 2001; Rycik & Rosler, 2009). When elementary teachers use only trade books for history content or when middle level English teachers focus discussions on the narrative or literary devices, historical misrepresentations go unchallenged. Students, further, cannot engage in historical inquiry when skewed stories are not balanced for nuance with supplementary primary sources, and historical documents are rarely used in elementary and middle level classrooms (Wineburg & Martin, 2009, p. 212). Researchers must examine the historicity of the engaging literature that teachers seek and utilize.

The scope and depth of the research field, however, is reliant on the specific historical topic. Children's literature about Christopher Columbus's explorations and interactions with peoples of the New World, for example, has been examined (Bickford, 2013a; Bigelow, 1998a, 1998b; Field & Singer, 2006; Henning, Snow-Gerono, Reed, & Warner, 2006; Peterson, 1998). Other topics, like slavery in America, have not been empirically explored. Research has identified various historical misrepresentations but did so with an undersized data pool of four books and no discernable empirical approach (Williams, 2009). Since America's peculiar institution of slavery is a historically consequential topic with significance that cannot be overstated, it is meaningful to rigorously examine its historical representation within various genres of children's literature.

Historical Misrepresentations

Historical misrepresentations are paradoxical in that they are both ubiquitous and obscured. While each is distinct in its own way, they frequently emerge in groups. To distinguish one from another is akin to separating dirt from gravel because they are easy to spot but difficult to disentangle. Such misrepresentations may arise from authors' intent to avoid

“clogging their stories with too much fact” (Graham, 2001, p. 54-55); they may also be unintentional, especially if authors were unaware of the latest historical research. This section details six authorial decisions that potentially muddy history retellings and cross the various children’s literature genres.

Presentism manifests when evaluating the past from a contemporary perspective, usually by employing an understanding not known to the historical actors (Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, 2001). To perceive as folly colonists’ lack of knowledge about disease or to view as fail-safe the American Patriots’ rebellious involvement in the Boston Tea Party are each examples of presentism. The former rests on knowledge unknown to historical figures at the time of action and the latter organizes the past as an inevitable or “foreordained and natural” culmination of historical events when it was quite subject to change (Loewen, 2010, p. 112-113). Presentism is hindsight and, in Douglas Egerton’s (2004) words, “hindsight is the enemy of understanding” (p. 128).

Omission is palpable when important understandings and considerations are excluded from the historical narrative (Bickford, 2013a; Nokes, 2011). Due to the complicated nature of history, it is inevitable and important for teachers to leave out unnecessary content, but it is historically misrepresentative to exchange complexity for clarity or intricacy for simplicity. To begin a lesson about America’s involvement in World War II with the bombing of Pearl Harbor excludes the historical significance of the American military bases across the Pacific, which was an ongoing tension that contributed to Japan’s decision to bomb Pearl Harbor. To disregard such content is the historical misrepresentation of omission.

Chronological ethnocentrism, more implicit and latent than other historical misrepresentations, emerges when contemporary folks are portrayed as better, smarter, or more resourceful than their predecessors (Loewen, 2010). As Diamond (2005, 2011) demonstrated in locales around the world and Mann (2005, 2011) established in the Americas, members of ancient civilizations were less technologically advanced but no less ingenious and intelligent than modern civilians. The latter could no more safely navigate the Amazon River in the former’s world than the former could ably negotiate the New York City subway system. A book’s author or a reader who connotes or implies otherwise engages in chronological ethnocentrism, which is historically misrepresentative.

Exceptionalism emerges when a historical figure completed a historically accurate, extraordinary, yet anomalous action and is portrayed as representative of a larger demographic (Bickford, 2013a; Williams, 2009). While Harriet Tubman’s exploits on the Underground Railroad and Rosa Park’s refusal to cede her seat are historically accurate, Tubman is not historically representative of a typical female slave (Genovese, 1972) and Parks’s choices and actions that single day are not historically representative of her work in the civil rights movement (Theoharis, 2013). Tubman and Parks should each be celebrated, but as successful anomalies. When *only* their stories are told, children generate unrealistic impressions of slavery and the civil rights movement because countless slaves and civil rights workers never achieved what Tubman and Parks did. All female slaves did not gain their freedom. The vast majority lived under the literal whip of slavery and died under its metaphorical yoke. Similarly, African-Americans did not suddenly gain social acceptance after one lady chose to sit in the front of the bus. All credible historians would contend it took decades and most would argue social acceptance is still

not universal. History is misrepresented and incomplete when the exceptional story is the only story told (Christensen, 2012).

Heroification manifests in literature when a lone person seemingly single-handedly transforms history or receives entirely more acclaim than is deserved (Bickford, 2013a; Loewen, 1995). While historical figures like Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt each altered history, neither acted alone. They guided followers, but were influenced by and acted in concert with numerous others. They each accomplished great deeds but, like all people, failed frequently and made regrettable mistakes. Heroification manifests when historical figures are portrayed as only good and without benefit of others' support.

Villainification is the logical, and previously undetected and unexamined, extension to heroification. Villainification materializes when a historical figure ostensibly alters history for the worse or receives far more condemnation than is warranted. Christopher Columbus unquestionably deserves some scorn for his deeds, but he had fiscal support from financially powerful people (not the least of whom were Spanish royalty) and physical aid from intimidating workers and sailors. Columbus did not act alone and his deeds were not entirely pure evil, even though some—but certainly not all—scholars characterize it as such (Zinn, 1999); he generates polarized responses yet is not evil incarnate (Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2011). Villainification materializes when historical figures are portrayed as only bad and without benefit of others' aid for misdeeds.

Intentionally or unintentionally, all storytellers skew history to some extent based on what details are included, excluded, or focused on. If unchecked or unnoticed, presentism, omission, chronological ethnocentrism, exceptionalism, heroification, and villainification contribute to historically misrepresentative narratives (Kent & Simpson, 2008; Loewen, 1995; Nokes, 2011). While T. Lee Williams (2009) explored slavery-themed children's literature and identified illustrative trends, findings were far from empirical for no less than five reasons (Krippendorff, 2013).

First, Williams (2009) examined slavery within *Dear America* books, a popular children's series published by Scholastic. The publisher seeks commercial success, as all publishers do. Scholastic identifies and maintains profitable publishing patterns. There is little doubt to the prescriptive writing within *Dear America*. The sample is skewed because there is not an assortment of publication companies. Second, *Dear America* (and its derivative, *My Name is America*) specializes in historical fiction. There are no narrative non-fiction, biography, or books of a mixed genre within the series. Williams does not have a representative sample of genres. Third, Williams noted there were only ten *Dear America* books centered in mid-19th century America. She selected only four, which is not indicative of a representative sample considering the small size of the initial pool (Krippendorff, 2013). Fourth, Williams did not adequately detail the process for establishing the sample. She noted the selected books "incorporated a sample of the series' treatment of the institution and experience of slavery" (Williams, p. 26). Williams's selection criteria were characters of varied ages, of disparate geographical locations, and of racial variance; this indicates variety, but not representative sampling (Krippendorff, 2013). Finally, she did not explicitly detail the analysis procedures; this step is critical in order for the researcher to distinguish empirical findings from arbitrary inferences (Krippendorff, 2013).

Any findings derived from an undersized data pool skewed by multiple variables cannot be generalized and should only be viewed for illustrative purposes. Without a rigorous approach, researchers and teachers alike remain unsure of her findings. The subsequent section details an empirical approach to reexamine and extend illustrative yet tentative conclusions about historical (mis)representations of slavery in children's literature.

Method

Statistical sampling theory informed our approach to establishing a representative data pool (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 337) and we incorporated rigorous qualitative content analysis research methods (Kline, 2008; Maxwell, 2010; Pillow 2003; Wineburg, 1998). To generate a sizeable data pool, we collected titles of slavery-themed trade books intended for elementary and middle level grades published in the last 60 years. The initial pool comprised over 410 books, of which 41 were randomly selected (see Appendix A). These titles represented the almost three-to-one ratio of historical fiction to narrative non-fiction seen in young adult history-based literature.

To scrutinize the narrative for historical representations and misrepresentations (specifically those mentioned above) in order to identify tentative patterns, I (John) read each book and reflexively recorded observable patterns and anomalies (Bickford, 2013a; Kline, 2008). This inductive analysis enabled development of working hypotheses, or codes, based on emergent and synthesized patterns (Bickford, 2013a; Chick & Corle, 2012; Wineburg, 1998). To determine findings using the previously established and refined codes, I then reread and reevaluated each book using the newly-generated content analysis tool (see Table 1). To establish dependability and relevancy of findings, I critically examined and reviewed findings generated in the preceding step. Finally, we only reported those findings that were theoretically significant to the historical event and eliminated those not fully grounded on empirical data (Chick et al., 2010; Krippendorff, 2013).

Table 1

Content Analysis Protocol

1. For (about) what age/grade do you feel this book is intended?
2. Genre? Non-fiction, historical fiction, narrative non-fiction, something else? (Would the genre likely be clear to a young reader?)
3. What themes emerged within this book?
 - a. Life on the plantation
 - b. Escape from the plantation
 - c. Civil War
 - d. Life after slavery (by gaining freedom or after 1865)
 - e. Something else
4. Which perspectives were addressed within this book?
 - a. Female field slave's perspective
 - b. Female house/trade slave's perspective

- c. Male field slave's perspective
 - d. Male house/trade slave's perspective
 - e. Ex-slave (escaped, given freedom, or after 1865)
 - f. Male or female slave owner's perspective
 - g. Abolitionist's perspective
 - h. Confederate perspective
 - i. Union perspective
 - j. Someone else?
5. Who was the main character(s)? Give name, age, gender, ethnicity/race, legal status (slave, free black, or white), and geographic location.
6. White violence/brutality, slave rebellion:
- a. Did the book depict violence? How often was violence mentioned?
 - b. Describe the violence. Was whipping mentioned? Or was it described in graphic detail?
 - c. Was there ever mention of rape?
 - d. Was there any mention of actual slave rebellions? Or was there mention of whites' fears of slave uprisings?
7. Family and treatment:
- a. Were slaves presented as a nuclear family? Or were the families presented as a physically disjointed, but emotionally attached unit?
 - b. Was the main character(s) a house/trade slave or a field slave?
 - c. Was there a presence of both house and field slaves?
 - d. Were the slaves fed well or underfed (or was this not mentioned)?
 - e. Were slaves well clothed or under-clothed (or was this not mentioned)?
 - f. Did the slaves act/speak towards whites in a socially/emotionally connected way? Or, did the slaves act/speak one way to the white people's faces and another way when whites were absent? Were the slaves openly resistant towards the whites?
 - g. Were the slaves clothed and fed well? Or were they clothed/fed poorly?
8. Freedom, optimism, and benevolence:
- a. Did the main character (or any slave) express optimism for future freedom?
 - b. Did the main character (or any slave) earn freedom? (If yes, *how*?)
 - c. Did any white characters express optimism for the slave's future freedom?
 - d. Did any white characters show benevolence or compassion for the slaves and their servitude?
9. Literacy:
- a. Did the slaves *typically* speak in proper or improper English? Give examples.
 - b. Did any slaves (or free blacks) know how to read (and/or write)?
 - c. Did any white characters teach the slaves how to read?
 - d. Did any white characters *knowingly* tolerate the slaves' literacy?
10. 1861-1865 and After:
- a. Did the book cover the years of the Civil War?
 - b. Did the book cover the years after the Civil War?
 - c. How was post-freedom (reconstruction) characterized?

11. Were any primary sources explicitly utilized within the book (introduction, Foreword, narrative, Afterward)? Were any primary sources mentioned within the book?
12. Examples of Presentism.
13. Examples of Omission.
14. Examples of Chronological Ethnocentrism.
15. Examples of Exceptionalism.
16. Examples of Heroification.
17. Examples of Villainification.
18. Were there any parts of the book that just seemed historically inaccurate or implausible?

Findings

The above data collection methods and analytic techniques are rigorous and consistent with best practice content analysis research previously conducted on children's literature (Bickford, 2013a; Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick et al., 2010). Findings are based on a sizeable and representative data pool. This section contextualizes the historical misrepresentations within both the history research on slavery and empirical findings derived from over forty books.

Securing Freedom

Historians characterize slaves' attainment of freedom as anomalous (Genovese, 1972; Schneider & Schneider, 2001). Escape attempts provided danger and a chance for freedom, but success was highly improbable (Blight, 2012; Bordewich, 2012; Frost, 2012). Slave owners' wills rarely proffered freedom; abolitionists seldom purchased and liberated slaves; slaves rarely were able to save money to self-finance their freedom (Schermerhorn, 2012; Yellin, 2004). Prior to Lincoln's involvement and the end of the Civil War, generations of slaves were born into and died under the yoke of slavery. Notable examples of slaves' clandestine, successful escapes abound in popular consciousness but these singular accomplishments were not representative of the typical slave's experience (Berlin, 1998; Blight, 2012; Yellin, 2004).

In our pool of children's books, slaves secured freedom in every book save two. Stated differently, slaves lived their entire lives under the burden of slavery in less than five percent of the books examined. This distortion of historicity cannot be overstated. Almost three-quarters of the books included successful slave escapes ($n = 29$) and almost one-fifth culminated in the Civil War ($n = 10$). The remaining two can be contextualized as anomalous. *The Slave Dancer* focused on a white boy who witnessed the Middle Passage and its brutalities (Fox, 1973); in *Roots*, the descendants of Kunta Kinte obtained freedom at the end of the Civil War but not before generations lived and died as slaves (Haley, 1976). The lack of historicity in the high percentage of narratives where (at least one or more) slaves secured freedom is profound. *Elijah of Buxton*, in which the child Elijah daringly ventured outside of Canada and rescued the baby Hope who was to be sent to slavery, is an illustrative example of a historically misrepresentative story (Curtis, 2007). No less than four historical misrepresentations contributed to this regrettable pattern that Elijah and baby Hope exemplified.

First, exceptionalism emerged when the anomaly was presented as typical. Narratives focused on the singular create an exceptionalist story, which is incomplete. Nearly every book in the data pool—whether historical (like those about Henry “Box” Brown, William Parker, William and Ellen Craft, and Harriet Jacobs) or historically fictitious—was replete with exceptionalism. Presentism, a second historical misrepresentation, manifested in the

presumption slaves who did not escape were simply not bold enough to plan and execute an escape. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi noted how frequently children inquired as to why he did not escape (Wineburg, 2001, p. 22-24). Children frequently view Levi's story not as one of survival but instead as missed opportunity to escape and seek revenge on the guards. This (mis)understanding originates from the presentist notion that escape was possible if only the prisoner simply executed a carefully planned escape (Wineburg, 2001). Heroification, the third historical misrepresentation, was palpable during stories that focused on Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and similarly anomalous fictitious characters. Omission, the fourth and final, was present when the books' narratives did not integrate the typical slaves' life pattern: birth through death in bondage. Findings provided empirical support to previous discoveries about slaves securing freedom (Williams, 2009). Since slaves largely did not obtain freedom, this was a glaring historical misrepresentation. There are many more.

Violence

Historians characterize the majority of slave owners as brutish with punishment (Genovese, 1972; Schneider & Schneider, 2001; Zinn, 1999). Whippings and beatings were ubiquitous and dismemberment was not uncommon (Blight, 2012; Schermerhorn, 2012). A review of the *Dear America* data pool revealed that books either completely excluded violence from the narrative or had cursory mention of non-graphic slapping and "swats" (Williams, 2009, p. 26). This review found no examples of whipping, branding, killing, or hanging except for a few revolting slaves hanging a minor white character, a black-on-white crime. This appears to be the historical misrepresentation of omission; however, the skewed data pool does not reveal its prevalence across children's literature. Empirical data indicated the vast majority of books ($n = 30$) rarely mentioned or minimized the brutality. In *Come Morning*, for instance, violence was not mentioned and only implied with statements like, "I came by those scars same way all slaves do: something I done, something I left undone" (Guccione, 1995, p. 29).

Not every book egregiously sanitized or omitted violence. Over one-quarter ($n = 11$) of books graphically depicted violence. Some books, such as *Chains* (Anderson, 2008) and *Ajeemah and His Son* (Berry, 1991), included whipping, hanging, brandings, and other violent forms of torture. While brutal content is certainly inappropriate for elementary students and likely questionable for middle level students, it is dubious to detach the ferocity required to forcibly compel free labor from the stories of those who were forced to labor. Data indicated omission was evident in the majority of books, however two peculiarities emerged. First, the historical fiction genre demonstrated stronger historicity than narrative non-fiction. To be specific, historical fiction had a higher ratio of graphic-to-sanitized brutality (10:20) than narrative non-fiction (1:10). This was unexpected considering, as some theorists have asserted, that historical fiction has less responsibility for historical authenticity than narrative non-fiction (Graham, 2001; Lathey, 2001). A second peculiarity is a corollary to the first: previous research that noted scant brutality was done with a data pool comprised entirely of historical fiction (Williams, 2009). In our larger and multi-genre data pool, historical fiction was far more historically representative of the graphic brutality manifest during slavery. One possible explanation is that Scholastic, the sole publisher in Williams's (2009) data pool, engaged in deliberate self-censorship. Self-censorship is not uncommon in the publishing industry (Matusevich, 2006).

Rape and Light-Skinned Slaves

In the aptly titled history book *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs*, Kathleen Brown (1996) explored the dynamics of economic, sexual, social, and marital power on the plantation, most specifically between the male slave owner and female slave. In precarious positions, female slaves were compelled to succumb to their male owners' sexual desires, raise the resultant child, and maintain silence about both the relationship and the child's conspicuously distinct skin color (Hunter, 1997; White, 1999). Harriet Jacobs, an escaped slave made famous for publishing an autobiography under a pseudonym, shared a first-hand account of the lascivious nature of such a relationship (Yellin, 2004). The children of such unions had distinct skin colors; owner frequently sold the children to avoid social judgments (Genovese, 1972; Owens, 1976). While such children were ubiquitous in the South, the social stigma was present during slavery, throughout Reconstruction, and into the next century (Blassingame, 1977; Hurmence, 1984, 1989).

Seven different books in the data pool either implicitly or explicitly referenced rape or the resultant children. To gain classification as an implicit reference, a character in the book had to conspicuously mention illicit relationships like *Once on this River* (Wyeth, 1998), "filthy words" mumbled from owner to female slave like in *Letters from a Slave Girl* (Lyons, 1992), or notice and puzzle over different skin colors between parents and children as with *Melittle* (Shaik, 1997). To acquire the denotation of an explicit reference, a character had to unambiguously mention an owner's parentage of a slave child as in *Roots* (Haley, 1976), *Seaward Born* (Wait, 2003), or *Send One Angel Down* (Schwartz, 2000), or include lustful stares coupled with grabbing of slaves' sexual body parts like *The Old African* (Lester, 2005) and *Send One Angel Down* (Schwartz, 2000), or note a location intended to accommodate slave owners' lust as in *Send One Angel Down* (Schwartz, 2000). While rape and the children of rape are certainly inappropriate topics for elementary and arguably so for middle level students, they were historical realities that appeared in roughly one-sixth of the historical fiction ($n = 5/30$) and narrative non-fiction ($n = 2/11$) books examined. Of the seven books that referenced such content to any degree, two were written at a middle grades reading level, specifically *Letters from a Slave Girl* (Lyons, 1992) and *Roots* (Haley, 1976). Five were written at an intermediate elementary reading level, specifically *Melittle* (Shaik, 1997), *Once on this River* (Wyeth, 1998), *Seaward Born* (Wait, 2003), *Send One Angel Down* (Schwartz, 2000), and *The Old African* (Lester, 2005).

The vast majority of books ($n = 34$) made no implicit or explicit reference to this ubiquitous power dynamic. Omission, a historical misrepresentation, is the intentional exclusion of historically accurate content. It is, however, prudent to do so with content inappropriate for young readers. When (or if) such content was included, the potential for villainification emerges. Villainification, previously unexamined and the logical corollary to heroification, manifested when a historical figure (or historical fictional character) was ascribed a disproportionate amount of blame or portrayed as having only negative characteristics and dispositions. Such content has the potential to distract the reader, especially young readers, from the system of slavery that enabled the individual slave owner to act as they place blame on the individual's actions. In other words, the unrestrained owner acquired all blame for his immoral actions; the system that enabled the owner's actions and the politicians, slave traders, and society that maintained the system evaded culpability. Such stories cultivate villainification of the owner while those who shared culpability were omitted.

Clothing and Food

Historians characterize the majority of slaves as underfed and under-clothed (Boles, 1983; Genovese, 1972; Schermerhorn, 2012). Most slaves lived in miserly conditions and ate meager rations, save house slaves on expansive plantations with owners who sought to demonstrate their wealth through house slaves' attire (Berlin, 1998; Owens, 1976; Parish, 1989). It was observed that slaves in only the *Dear America* data pool did not experience starvation and were not compelled to wear inadequate clothing even in inclement weather (Williams, 2009, p. 26). Empirical data indicated omission but not to the degree Williams reported.

The majority of the books ($n = 29$) either did not mention or drastically minimized the slaves' inadequate food and clothing. For the young reader unaware of the blatant omission, the presentist implication that slaves had adequate food and sufficient clothing emerges. Presentism is the act of viewing the historical narrative through one's own life's experiences; the young reader likely assumes clothing and food were ample because nothing in the (majority of the) stories indicated otherwise. Viewed in totality, the historical misrepresentations of omission and presentism were evident in regards to clothing and food in the majority of the books. In doing so, this omission (and by extension presentism) reduces some of the slave-owner's culpability. Obi, a slave in the historical fiction *Which Way Freedom?* (Hansen, 1986), illustrates this blatant misrepresentation when he noted how well the slaves were fed and clothed.

While over one-quarter ($n = 11$) graphically detailed slaves' impoverishment and scant attire, it was significant that the majority did so more through reference to the Middle Passage ($n = 8$) than the plantation ($n = 3$). For instance, the reader is confronted with the horrendous food and filthy living conditions (or, more aptly, storage space) of the Middle Passage in *My Name is Not Angelica* (O'Dell, 1989). While food and living conditions were worse on the Middle Passage than on the plantation, its exclusion from the either narrative was historical omission (and by extension presentism). Noticeable blame is placed on the slave traders and not slave-owning farmers when narratives mention squalid living conditions and meager food more frequently in reference to the Middle Passage than to the plantation. The implication for the young reader was that European mercantilists—not American planters—were responsible for slaves' inadequate clothing and undernourishment; this further reduced the slave-owner's culpability.

Family Structure

Slave owners frequently sold individual slaves away from their respective family for financial purposes and punitive reasons. Resolving debt and generating profit were entirely possible, especially in the late 18th century when the cotton gin's emergence increased slave prices (Schermerhorn, 2012). Slave owners also used forced separation or its inherent threat as tools for compelling conformity (Brown, 1996; Schermerhorn, 2012).

Previous children's literature research noted that the system of slavery purposefully damaged the slave family unit, either through sale or the threat of sale, yet the research inaccurately reported the prevalence of family separation in the children's literature (Williams, 2009). "The [*Dear America*] series also appears to present an inaccurate view of family life among the enslaved. ... In *Freedom's Wings*, Corey's family remains a strongly cohesive unit on the plantation (Williams, p. 27)." This misrepresents both *Freedom's Wings* (Wyeth, 2001) and at least two other stories. In *Freedom's Wings*, Corey's family is divided when his father escapes to avoid sale. Other slave families on Corey's owner's plantation, like Mingo's for

instance, are similarly disjointed. *Freedom's Wings* is historically misrepresentative in many ways, yet it accurately represented both familial separation and fear of familial separation. Previous research similarly misrepresented the family structure of other books (Williams). Slave families were disconnected and individuals vocalized fears of further separation in both *I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly* (Hansen, 1997) and *When Will This Cruel War Be Over?* (Denenberg, 1996). While the slavery-based *Dear America* books are historically misrepresentative in various ways, Williams mischaracterized how the books portrayed family structure.

In the larger data pool, slave families were disjointed in over four-fifths of the books ($n = 35$). When considering Harriet Tubman united her family in freedom and that she was the focus for three narrative non-fiction books, the proportion of historically representative books—as it relates to family structure—would surpass 9:1. In the three books that did not achieve historicity on familial structure and that did not center on Harriet Tubman, all were historical fiction and all centered on successful escape (which, as noted above, was possible but improbable). In *Elijah of Buxton* (Curtis, 2007), the main character was born in Canada to a family of escaped slaves; slaves escaped as entire family units in both *My Name is Sally Little Song* (Woods, 2006) and *The Last Safe House* (Greenwood, 1998). Exceptionalism emerged in narratives that centered on this highly unlikely circumstance. Omission manifested in books that presented the nuclear family as typical. Presentism likely materializes as a young reader assumes that nuclear families must have been typical under slavery because of the ubiquity of the nuclear family in contemporary society.

Previous research overstated how the *Dear America* books misrepresented slaves' family structure, but was correct in the books' abandonment of the traditional parental role (Williams, 2009). The adults and parents implausibly deferred to their children and other youngsters quite frequently in *Dear America* books. Such authorial decisions are common in contemporary children's literature and are likely due to the author writing purposefully to children, the intended audience (Collins & Graham, 2001).

House to Field Slaves

Rural, large plantation field slaves disproportionately outnumbered all other slaves, including: house slaves, craft, trade and artisan slaves, and slaves who lived in urban settings (Berlin, 1998; Fox-Genovese, 1988; Levine, 1977). The majority of slave owners had "five or fewer slaves"; most slaves worked in the field even though some owners had house slaves (or slaves with craft, trade, or artisan jobs) (Parish, 1989, p. 5-6; Schermerhorn, 2012). Previous research noted two patterns within the *Dear America* books: no main character was a field slave and all stories were set on large plantations (Williams, 2009).

An empirical examination, however, verified previous findings of omission but with added nuance. House slaves were represented as the main or one of the main characters in nearly four-fifths ($n = 33$) of the books, both historical fiction and narrative non-fiction. This significant disproportion of house slaves in relation to field slaves was similar to previous results (Williams, 2009). Field slaves, however, comprised the main or one of the main roles in 40% ($n = 17$) of the books reviewed, a previously unidentified pattern. Almost three-quarters ($n = 29$) of the stories in this data pool were not located on large plantations. *Melitte*, for instance, depicts a young field slave girl's struggle to survive as the only slave on a small, failing Louisiana farm (Shaik, 1997). Taken cumulatively, these findings indicate misrepresentation but not to the

degrees previously stated (Williams, 2009). While not as frequent as in family structure, there were traces of exceptionalism, omission, and presentism in those books that did present the house slave (or servant) as typical. Exceptionalism was palpable when the anomalous was presented as standard; omission when the typical was absent; and presentism—in the young reader's mind—if the *Gone with the Wind* archetype manifested.

Literacy

Slaves' achievement of literacy was highly unlikely. Perceived as a danger to the system of slavery, slave literacy was an illegal, punishable offense for both the slave and the teacher (Berlin, 1998; Genovese, 1972; Zinn, 1999). Even after the Civil War, ex-slaves achieved literacy in only the rarest of circumstances, a trend that did not change for half a century (Fort, 1999 as cited in Williams, 2009; Zinn). This pattern of illiteracy, however, was absent in the *Dear America* series where three of the four books contained literate slaves (Williams).

Empirical examination confirmed Williams's (2009) discovery about the frequency of fictional slaves' literacy but it was contextually contingent to genre. The vast majority, nearly five-sixths, of historical fiction books had at least one literate central character ($n = 24$) but the opposite was true for narrative non-fiction books where only two out of eleven had a literate central character. While instances of literate slaves and ex-slaves, like Anthony Burns and Frederick Douglass, were historically accurate, they were not representative of the typical slave's experience. They were, however, nearly ubiquitous in the historical fiction books on slavery. In *The Poison Place* (Lyons, 1997), Moses, a slave whose master first tolerated then nurtured his literacy, exemplified the literate slave as a central character. A plantation where not a single slave was literate, like in *The Old African* (Lester, 2005), was far less common in the children's literature but more historically accurate. This finding suggests exceptionalism, omission, and possibly chronological ethnocentrism. Exceptionalism and omission were apparent when the anomalous story was celebrated and the typical story was excluded. While likely unintended, these were the direct result of authorial decisions. Chronological ethnocentrism was similarly unintended but an indirect implication of the author's choices. Since the young student was actively reading about a group of people who largely could not read, she would likely assume that she was smarter, better, and more advanced. A young student's knowledge of her historical predecessor's lack of knowledge is unintended and negative implication of historically misrepresentative books that include slaves' literacy. I (John) witnessed this chronological ethnocentrism frequently when teaching young adolescents about ancient cultures' ignorance of the nature of disease and the spherical shape of the earth.

Whites' Compassion and Assistance

Viewing slaves as little more than farm animals, White encouragement and benevolence was virtually nonexistent in the South (Genovese, 1972; Schneider & Schneider, 2001; Zinn, 1999). White Southerners, slave-owning and non-slave-owning alike, actively resisted Abolitionist influence out of fear it would spark or embolden slaves' dissatisfaction or escape; Northerners, Quakers, and free Blacks were not welcomed and viewed with suspicion (Berlin, 1998; Egerton, 2004). In the *Dear America* books, White Southerners donated bottles of ink to support diary writing and complimented proper English while White Abolitionists provided tangible support for escape in two different books (Williams, 2009). Such encouragement by White Southerners was decidedly anomalous (Renfro, 1993); active Abolitionist aid in the South was rare but violent when present (Cavendish, 2012; Huntington, 2012).

Empirical examination determined Whites' benevolence, verbal encouragement, or active aid was present in nearly three-quarters ($n = 29$) of the selected books. In *Which Way Freedom?* (Hansen, 1986), the plantation Mistress demonstrated benevolence when she protected slaves from punishments (p. 11) and encouragement for a better future when she indicates God would not tolerate the sin of slavery (p. 29-31). *Seaward Born* (Wait, 2003) was sated with active support from Whites, from an owner's will granting freedom (p. 12) to a boat captain knowingly stowing a runaway slave (p. 83-84). While emergent in nearly two-thirds ($n = 19$ out of 30) of historical fiction books and nearly every narrative non-fiction book ($n = 10$ out of 11), such support needs to be contextually qualified. The data indicated that support was invariably (although not entirely) from Northern Abolitionists or Quakers after slaves had escaped; in all but a few minor instances, it was not from Southern Whites.

Such narratives historically represented where White aid originated yet also indicated exceptionalism and omission. To be clear, while there were historical examples of White slave owners' encouragement and non-owners' support, these were the exceptional few and are not representative of Whites in general. Omission of the typical was evident. Such exceptionalism and omission connote to the young reader that help was available and slaves needed simply to locate it; stated differently, young readers might unintentionally place the onus for a better life on the slaves themselves instead of the White establishment that purposefully constructed and actively maintained the slavery system. This train of thought inadvertently generates presentism. To be clear, it cannot be known for certain how each reader will react to such a story. It seems entirely likely, however, that children will respond to stories about white aid by assuming that slaves needed simply to locate the support that was clearly there. While speculative, this response is akin to an anecdote about how upper elementary children frequently responded to Holocaust survivor Primo Levi's story with questions replete with unintentional blame-the-victim implications (Wineburg, 2001, p. 22-24). In their mind, escape from Holocaust camps was entirely possible and Levi only had to search hard enough. Similarly, because White aid was real in the children's literature for some of the more exceptional slaves, the onus of responsibility fell on all the slaves to identify places to obtain Whites' support. The slaves, according to such logic, needed simply to detect the possibilities. Such explicit exceptionalism and omission in the story contribute mightily to implicit presentism in the reader's mind.

Reconstruction and "the Nadir of Race Relations"

Ex-slaves experienced a precarious, volatile post-Civil War America; their political, social, and economic gains were dubious and tenuous (Hunter, 1997; Levine, 1977). This period has been aptly termed the "nadir of race relations" (Loewen, 2010, p. 189; Logan, 1965, p. 79). In the *Dear America* books, ex-slaves made swift upward social and economic climbs after freedom and during Reconstruction (Williams, 2009). In the larger data pool, empirical evidence indicated otherwise. The vast majority ($n = 38$) of the books omitted the terrifying and uncertain nature of this period for ex-slaves. Stated differently, the stories ended at freedom and excluded the septic sea of Reconstruction that slaves had to traverse. While this might make for a good story, it is historically specious. Replete with the historical misrepresentation of omission, this popular storyline elicits the presentist notion in the young reader's mind that freedom provided ex-slaves with various opportunities for social, political, and economic improvement. Through what has been termed the "availability heuristic" (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973, p. 208; Wineburg, 2007, p. 7), such omission and presentism unintentionally generates a storyline that

seamlessly runs from Lincoln and 1865 directly to *Brown v. Board of Education* and Dr. King's dream (with a world war or two somewhere in between).

The historical fiction upper elementary book, *Forty Acres and Maybe a Mule* (Robinet, 1998), balances the hopeful excitement for life after freedom with the Reconstruction's reality. Optimism they would "wake up singing and go to bed laughing" (Robinet, 1998, p. 13) on their own land turned sour when nightriders terrorized them (p. 86, 93) and Black Codes threatened the newly freed yet marginalized ex-slaves (p. 88-91). The overwhelming majority of the books do not provide young readers with the indeterminate and uncertain spirit of this period, like *Forty Acres*. *Forty Acres*, however, ends with the White family, also known as the Bibbs family tangibly supporting the Black, City family. While such support did occur, it was rare and is replete with exceptionalism. Still, *Forty Acres* demonstrated more historicity than most.

Language

A cursory reading of actual slave narratives indicated a preponderance of improper English (Hurmence, 1984, 1989). The grammar, syntax, prose, and idioms emblematic of a slave dialect appeared in two centuries of slave letters, speeches, and interviews (Blassingame, 1977). Children's authors must struggle to re-create authentic slave dialects that contemporary young readers can comprehend (Collins & Graham, 2001; Lathey, 2001). Authors of *Dear America* books attempted to represent dialect differently; one was characterized as an authentic dialect, a second as an attempt at authenticity, and a third as misrepresentative in its contemporary syntax (Williams, 2009). Almost three-fourths of the empirically examined books ($n = 30$) represented (or attempted to represent) slave dialect authentically. In *Elijah of Buxton*, for instance, the author took careful note to give authentic accents to those recently escaped ex-slaves and in distinction with those born in Canada (Curtis, 2007). Williams speculated the reason for specious dialect, like those by African-born and Georgia-living Minna in *Now Let Me Fly* (Johnson, 1993) was the intended audience's reading level. Our study noted, however, all but one of the books with contemporary vernacular were at fifth-grade reading levels or above (some as high as eighth grade). Williams's speculation appears to be unsupported by empirical evidence generated in a larger data pool. Considering the delicate balance between authenticity and readability that historical fiction authors must traverse, the historical misrepresentation of dialect appears benign when present (and it was present in just one-quarter of the examined books).

Chronological Ethnocentrism

Identified and explored in the above subsection about literacy, chronological ethnocentrism was potentially manifest in each and every subsection through implication. When reading about previous generations' enslavement of others and all the violent and demoralizing implications of enslavement, a young child will likely presume previous generations were morally inferior. Derived from the availability heuristic (Wineburg, 2007; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), an example of this thought might be, "We don't do that sort of thing but other people in the past did because they were bad." That a young, uncritical reader will draw such a presumptive conclusion seems likely; this supposition implies the moral superiority of contemporary society (Bean & Harper, 2006; Wineburg, 2001). By not contextualizing past society's mistreatment within the framework of contemporary society's misdeeds, the young reader assumes exploitation and abuse ended in 1865. The former is an explicit authorial choice while the latter appears to be an unintended resultant implication of not having the space to

contextualize society's sustained mistreatment (albeit in different forms). Chronological ethnocentrism arguably appears in all such areas (Loewen, 2010).

Mitigating Historical Misrepresentation

Elementary students should not read a book, like *The Old African* (Lester, 2005), where slave owners "[stared] at the women with naked lust" (p. 26) or grabbed the breasts of female slaves, which appeared later in the same story. The teacher simply cannot ignore, avoid, or conceal its sexual content. *The Old African* is historically accurate yet inappropriate for young children; the content within its pages is simply not suitable for the age of students who can readily comprehend its narrative. The majority of books we reviewed are developmentally appropriate because they have suitable content and engaging narratives, yet most are sated with historical misrepresentations. Historical distortion alone, however, should not preclude their curricular inclusion. When balanced appropriately, these trade books are fertile portholes to student-constructed historical understandings. To do so, we encourage teachers juxtapose multiple children's trade books with rich, representative primary sources while utilizing discipline-specific methodology.

The use of multiple trade books creates a context in which students are confronted with divergent perspectives and varying degrees of representation. Using such literature elicits students' attention and sparks questions about incongruities, omissions, and misrepresentations. Teachers, then, can provide students with rich primary sources. To guide students' active scrutiny of historical documents, scholars detail history-specific yet age-appropriate methods for elementary (Baildon & Baildon, 2012; Bickford, 2013b) and secondary students (Loewen, 2010; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg et al., 2011). The trade books act as secondary historical texts for children and guide students during their evaluation of primary historical documents. The primary sources represent various perspectives and historical reference points. As the hammer and nail are the two compulsory tools for a builder to construct a home, primary and secondary sources are the two objects students need to actively construct historical understandings.

Trade books are written at children's reading level, but the primary sources must be located, abridged for length, and adapted for accessibility by young readers. The primary sources that we have located (Appendix B) represent a small sampling of the limitless possibilities within web-based resources. Collectively, they provide emblematic slave experiences to balance the aforementioned historical misrepresentations. Individually, each historical document attends to multiple historical misrepresentations. We encourage teachers to employ sources that connect strictly to their selected book(s). We abridged the sources for clarity and space constraints; the teacher should modify the syntax, prose, word choice, and content to ensure their accessibility and appropriateness for young readers' abilities and sensitivities. With proper selection and modification, the teacher can cultivate a context for students to actively assemble a more representative understanding of slavery and the nadir of race relations.

Discussion

We are quite frequently asked three questions about slavery-based children's literature. Why do children's authors distort history? Would it be better if kids read stories about whipping and rape? What can teachers do? This section addresses these three concerns. We cannot

directly answer the first question within the scope of this research. We do, however, identify that children's authors routinely exchange detailed accounts of representative historical events and people for engaging narratives. To engage the reader's attention and to sell books are two likely and prudent reasons for these distorted or sanitized tales of anomalous historical (fictional) figures. The alternative is not ideal for teachers of elementary and middle level students: improved historicity would arrive with amplified and gratuitous violence, among other things. An author trying to engage a reader in a story about the Holocaust will likely include both specifics, like innocent victims dying in Hitler's gas chamber, and historical context, like the culture of 20th century European anti-Semitism eliciting thousands (if not millions) of complicit, ordinary participants from various countries. To be blunt, a Holocaust story likely cannot be told without someone making someone die. A story about American slavery cannot likely be told without some violence, family separation, and little hope for freedom. As this research demonstrated, heroification, villainification, exceptionalism, presentism, chronological ethnocentrism, and omission manifest in children's literature in various ways and, at times, are ubiquitous. In short, such brutalities cannot be eliminated from the story while maintaining historicity. We do not advocate for exposing preadolescents and young adolescents to gratuitous cruelty. We also do not advocate for sanitizing history and, say, constructing a narrative of Hitler as a patriotic industrialist. To facilitate responsible historical representation in elementary and middle level classrooms, we advocate for shared responsibility. It is educators' responsibility to utilize age-appropriate literature, but it is education researchers' task to distinguish historically representative content from historically misrepresentative content. It is educators' responsibility to supplement literature with curricular tools that facilitate engagement and comprehension, yet it is education researchers' undertaking to identify rich primary sources for educators to incorporate.

This line of research is significant when noting the frequency with which reading replaces history at the elementary level and the irregularity with which age-appropriate, historically representative literature is used at the middle level. Modified primary source material that supplements accessible yet problematic literature provides opportunities for authentic inquiry. Different and divergent perspectives enable elementary and middle level students to investigate areas of corroboration and distinction, to ask questions about source and reliability of source, to contextualize claims with evidence, and more. We advocate for a classroom culture where learning history emulates the interpretative and evidentiary elements of writing history.

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Appendix I – Selected and Reviewed Children's Literature

Historical Fiction

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Appendix II – Modified Primary Source Material

Primary Document 1. Ford, Sarah. WPA Slave Narrative Project, Texas Narratives, Volume 16, Part 2. American Memory Collection Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Federal Writer's Project, United States Work Projects Administration (USWPA); Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

"I guess Massa Charles, what taken us when Massa Kit die, was 'bout da same as all white folks what owned slaves, some good and some bad. We has plenty to eat – more'n I has now – and plenty clothes and shoes. But de overseer was Uncle Big Jake, what's black like de rest of us, but he so meen I 'spect de devil done make him overseer down below long time ago. Dat de bad part of Massa Charles, 'cause he lets Uncle Jake whip de slave so much dat some like my papa what had spirit was all de time runnin' 'way. And even does your stomach be full, and does you have plenty clothes, dat bullwhip on your bare hide make you forgit de good part, and dat's de truth."

Primary Document 2. Graves, Sarah. WPA Slave Narrative Project, Missouri Narratives, Volume 10. American Memory Collection Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Federal Writer's Project, United States Work Projects Administration (USWPA); Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Aunt Sally brooded over the whipping memories, then under the influence of a brighter thought continued, "I belong to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, an' I ain't never cussed but once in my life, an' that was one time I nearly got two whippin's for somethin' I didn't do. Some of master's kin folks had a weddin', an' we walked to the church, an' somebody kicked dust on the bride's clothes, an' I got blamed but I ain't never kicked it. The master's daughter Puss, she kicked it. Ole mistress she whipped me. Yes'm, she whipped me. It was the worst whippin' I ever got. The worst whippin' in my whole life, an' I still got the marks on my body. Yes'm. I got 'em yet.

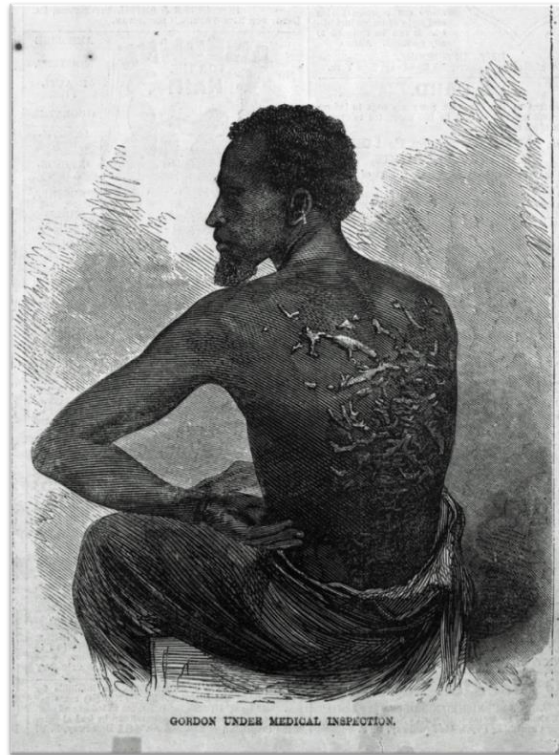
Primary Document 3. Slaves Shot. (1844, April 4). Palladium of Liberty 01, no.10: 05. American Memory Collection The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920. Library of Congress.

SLAVES SHOT.

The Plaquemine, La., Gazette, states that on the night of Saturday, the 17th ult., a gir. Belonging to Mr. Joseph Schlaire, was shot, While endeavoring to escape a man who ordered her to stop. She was in company with three or four other runaways. The person who shot her, first tried to stop her by firing at her fine-shot, which did not injure her materially; and as she still continued to run he brought her down with a charge of buck shot! J.P. Ashford, advertises as follows in the Natchez Courier, August 24th 1838. "Ranaway, a negro girl called Mary; has a small scar over her eye, a good many teeth missing, the letter A is branded on her cheek and forehead."

A.B. Matcalf, thus advertises a woman in the same paper, of June 15th 1838. "Ranaway, Mary, a black woman, has a scar on her back and right arm near the shoulder, caused by a rifle ball."

Primary Document 4. McPherson & Oliver (1863). Gordon under medical inspection. Prints and Photographs. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/89716298/>



Primary Document 5. Child, L.M. (1838). *Authentic Anecdotes of American Slavery* (P21-23, *The Cruelty of Slavery*). Second Edition Enlarged. Newburyport [Mass.]: Charles Whipple Personal Papers. American Memory Collection From Slavery to Freedom: The African-American Pamphlet Collection, 1822-1909. Library of Congress.

"Aiken, (S. C.), Dec. 20, 1836. *To the Editors of the Constitutionalist*--I have just returned from an inquest I held over the dead body of a negro man, a runaway, that was shot near the South Edisto, in this district (Barnwell), on Saturday morning last. He came to his death by his own recklessness. He refused to be taken alive--and said that other attempts to take him had been made, and he was determined that he would not be taken. When taken he was nearly naked, had a large dirk or knife, and a heavy club. He was at first (when those who were in pursuit of him found it absolutely necessary) shot at with small shot, with the intention of merely crippling him. He was shot at several times, and at last he was so disabled as to be compelled to surrender. He kept in the run of a creek in a very dense swamp all the time that the neighbors were in pursuit of him. As soon as the negro was taken, the best medical aid was procured, but he died on the same evening. One of the witnesses at the inquisition stated, that the negro boy said that he was from Mississippi, and belonged to so many persons, he did not

know who his master was, but again he said his master's name was *Brown*. He said his own name was Sam, and when asked by another witness who his master was, he muttered something like Augusta or Augustine. The boy was apparently above 35 or 40 years of age, about six feet high, slightly yellow in the face, very long beard or whiskers, and very stout built, and a stern countenance; and appeared to have been runaway a long time.” William H. Pritchard, Coroner (ex officio), Barnwell Dist., S.C.

Primary Document 6. Heywood, J.D. [Two African American boys facing front] / John D. Heywood's Photographic Art Rooms, New Berne, N.C., Prints and Photographs. Library of Congress.



Primary Document 7. Byrd, William. Texas Narratives, Volume XVI, Part 1. Ex-slave stories (Texas) p 182. American Memory Collection Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Library of Congress.

William BIRD, 97, was born a slave of Sam Byrd, near Madisonville Texas. William was with his master during the Civil War. The old Negro is very feeble, but enjoyed talking about old times. He lives in Madisonville.

“I has a bill of sale what say I's born in 1840, so I knows I's ninety-seven years old and I's owned by Marse Sam Byrd. My mother's name was Fannie and I dunno pappy's name, 'cause my mother allus say she found me a stray in the woods. I allus 'lieves my master was my pappy, but I never did know for sho'. Our quarters was log and the bed built with poles stuck in the cracks and cowhide stretched over, and we'd gather moss 'bout once a month and make

it soft. When it was real cold we'd git close together and I don't care how cold it got, we'd sleep jes as warm as these here feather beds. I split rails and chopped cotton and plowed with a wooden plow and druv Marse Byrd lots, 'cause he was a trader, slave trade most the time. He was good to us and give us lots to eat. He had a big garden and plenty sugar cane, and brown sugar. We'd press the juice out the cane 'tween two logs and cook it in the big washpot. We had sheepskin clothes in cold weather, with the fur part inside, no shoes less'n we wropped our feet in fur hides. But them clothes was warmer than these here cotton overalls. They're plumb cold!

Primary Document 8. Finding His Family. (1889, April 27). [from newspaper]. Cleveland Gazette 06, no.37: 02. American Memory Collection The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920. Library of Congress

FINDING HIS FAMILY.

Twenty-three Years' Search of an Old Man – Partially Successful.

St. Louis, Mo. – One of the most remarkable family reunions on record occurred at Dennison, Texas. At the outbreak of the civil war a family by name of Lindsey, consisting of man and wife and three children; a girl and two boys, were sold into slavery at Independence, Mo. The entire family were separated. At the close of the war the father made up his mind that he would devote the balance of his life to discovering the whereabouts of his family. For the past twenty-three years he had that sole object in view. He has traveled and worked, bearing innumerable hardships to accomplish his purpose. In Missouri a few weeks ago the old man obtained the first clew to his son Allen, who was reported to be at Paris, Tex. The old man worked his way to Paris, and there met his son Allen. He was so beside himself with joy that he embraced and kissed his son and wept like a child. Through Allen he learned that the other son, named Jim, had been a porter on the Missouri & Kansas railway for a number of years, and the only remaining child, Amanda, was married and living in the country within five miles of Dennison. The old man left Paris and came to Dennison, where he met his son, Jim, and made himself known. For a few moments Jim was loth to believe that it was his father, from whom he had been separated for over twenty-three years. Leaving Jim, the old man started for the country on foot, where he met his daughter, Amanda with whom he is spending a few days. The dearest object of all his wanderings, the wife, is yet to be found, and the old man declares he will devote the remaining years of his life in finding her out.

Primary Document 9. Amanda McDaniel. Interview by Edwin Driskell. American Memory Collection Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives form the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938, Georgia Narratives Vol 4, Part 3, 71-72. Library of Congress.

Mr. Hale, our master, was not rich like some of the other planters in the community. His plantation was a small one and he only had eight servants who were all women. He wasn't able to hire an overseer and all of the heavy work such as the plowing was done by his sons. Mrs. Hale did all of her own cooking and that of the slaves too. In all Mr. Hale had eleven children. I had to nurse three of them before I was old enough to go to the field to do work. When asked to tell about the kind of work the slaves had to do Mrs. McDaniel said: "Our folks

had to get up at four o'clock every morning and feed the stock first. By the time it was light enough to see they had to be in the fields where they hoed the cotton and the corn as well as the other crops. Between ten and eleven o'clock everybody left the field and went to the house where they worked until it was too dark to see. My first job was to take breakfast to those working in the fields. I used buckets for this. Besides this I had to drive the cows to and from the pasture. The rest of the day was spent in taking care of Mrs. Hale's young children. After a few years of this I was sent to the fields where I planted peas, corn, etc. I also had to pick cotton when that time came.

Primary Document 10. De Saussure, Louis D. (1852). Gang Of 25 Sea Island Cotton And Rice Negroes. Newspaper Roll #4428, 06, no.37: 02. American Memory Collection Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920. Library of Congress.

**GANG OF 25 SEA ISLAND
COTTON AND RICE NEGROES,**
By LOUIS D. DE SAUSSURE.

On *THURSDAY* the 25th Sept., 1852, at 11 o'clock, A.M.,
will be sold at RYAN'S MART, in Chalmers Street, in the
City of Charleston,

*A prime gang of 25 Negroes, accustomed
to the culture of Sea Island Cotton and
Rice.*

CONDITIONS.—One-half Cash, balance by Bond, bearing interest from day of sale, payable in one and two years, to be secured by a mortgage of the negroes and approved personal security. Purchasers to pay for papers.

No.	Age.	Capacity.	No.	Age.	Capacity.
1 Aleck,	33	Carpenter.	16 Hannah,	60	Cook.
2 Mary Ann,	31	Field hand, prime.	17 Cudjoe,	22	Prime field hand.
3—3 Louisa,	10		3—18 Nancy,	20	Prime field hand, sister of Cudjoe.
4 Abram,	25	Prime field hand.	19 Hannah,	34	Prime field hand.
5 Joly,	24	Prime field hand.	20 James,	13	Slight defect in knee from a broken leg.
6 Carolina,	5		21 Richard,	9	
7 Simon,	1½		22 Thomas,	6	
5—8 Daphne, infant.			5—23 John,	3	
9 Daniel,	45	Field hand, not prime.	1—24 Squash,	40	Prime field hand.
10 Phillis,	32	Field hand.	1—25 Thomas,	28	Prime field hand.
11 Will,	9				
12 Daniel,	6				
13 Margaret,	4				
14 Delia,	2				
7—15 Hannah,	2 months.				

Primary Document 11. Douglass, Margaret Crittenden (1854). *Educational Laws of Virginia; The Personal Narrative of Mrs. Margaret Douglass, a Southern Woman, Who Was Imprisoned for One Month in the Common Jail of Norfolk, under the Laws of Virginia, for the Crime of Teaching Free Colored Children to Read.* Boston: John P. Jewett and Co. General Collections, Library of Congress.

EDUCATIONAL LAWS OF VIRGINIA

THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF MRS. MARGARET DOUGLASS,
A SOUTHERN WOMAN, WHO WAS IMPRISONED FOR ONE MONTH
IN THE COMMON JAIL OF NORFOLK, UNDER THE LAWS OF VIRGINIA,
FOR THE CRIME OF TEACHING FREE COLORED CHILDREN TO READ.

“Search the Scriptures!”
“How can one read unless he be taught!”
HOLY BIBLE

BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY JOHN P. JEWETT & CO. CLEVELAND, OHIO
JEWETT, PROCTOR & WORTHINGTON

1854.

Primary Document 12. United States Army. (1864). *Report of the Board of Education for Freedmen, Department of the Gulf, For the Year 1864.* American Memory Collection: African American Perspectives: Pamphlets From The Daniel A.P. Murray Collection, 1818-1907. Library of Congress.

To teach a slave the dangerous arts of reading and writing, was a heinous offence, having, in the language of the statute, "a tendency to excite insubordination among the servile class, and punishable by imprisonment at hard labor for not more than twenty-one years, or by death, at the discretion of the Court." In the face of all obstacles, a few of the free colored people, of the poorer class, learned to read and write. Cases of like proficiency were found among the slaves, where some restless bondsman, yearning for the knowledge, that somehow he coupled with liberty, hid himself from public notice, to con over, in secret and laboriously, the magic letters. In other cases, limited teaching of a slave was connived at, by a master, who might find it convenient for his servant to read. Occasionally, the slave was instructed by some devout and sympathizing woman or generous man, who secretly violated law and resisted opinion, for the sake of justice and humanity

Primary Document 13. Duncan, William. (1829, April 13). Indenture between William and Hellen Duncan for the sale of a three-year-old slave named William. American Memory Collection The First American West: The Ohio River Valley, 1750-1820. Library of Congress.

November 28, 1828

This Indenture made and entered into this twenty eighth day of November one thousand Eight hundred and Twenty eight Between William Duncan of the County of Harrison & state of Kentucky of the one part and Hellen Duncan of the County and state aforesaid of the other part (Witness) that the said William Duncan for and inconsideration of the sum one Dollar to me in hand paid the Receipt whereof is hereby acknowledge have given granted and bargained and sold unto Hellen Duncan and her heirs (to wit) a certain negro Child named William Three years old a (slave for Life) and do forever warrant Defend the title of said negro Child against

my others heirs Executors or administrators or any other person or persons in Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal This day and Date above Written
William \ Duncan

Attest A M Camron Blain Reitzel Ellis Ashcraft Wm Asbury 1829 Aprl. 13th provd by
Camron & Asbury

Primary Document 14. Lynching Disease Spreading Northward. (1893, June 10). Cleveland Gazette 10, no.44. *The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920. American Memory.* Library of Congress.

The LYNCHING disease is spreading throughout the north, Michigan and Illinois citizens recently giving the country such disgraceful exhibitions. The south is largely blamable for this. The governor of Illinois has started out in a way which will surely result in checking the progress of that sort of thing in his state, and is to be commended for his prompt action. Good, large rewards for the apprehension of any one concerned in the lynchings will put a stop to them here in the north.

Primary Document 15. Child, L.M. (1838). Authentic Anecdotes of American Slavery (p. 7-8, The Influence of Slavery with Regard to Moral Purity). Second Edition Enlarged. Newburyport [Mass.]: Charles Whipple Personal Papers. American Memory Collection From Slavery to Freedom: The African-American Pamphlet Collection, 1822-1909. Library of Congress.

I had a young slave, who was, without exception, the prettiest creature I ever saw. She used to tend table for us, and almost always attracted the attention of visiters. A gentleman, who was often at our house, became dreadfully in love with her, and tried to make her accept handsome presents. One day she came to me, and asked me to speak to that gentleman, and forbid his saying any thing more to her; for he troubled her very much, and she could not get rid of him, though she constantly refused to listen to him. I promised to speak to the gentleman about it; and I did so, telling him that his attentions were very unpleasant to my slave, and begged him to refrain from offering them in future. For a few weeks he desisted; but at the end of that time, he came to me and said, 'Miss G., I must have that girl! I cannot live without her!' He offered me a very high price. *I pitied the poor fellow, and so I sold her to him.*" Miss G. was an unmarried woman, between twenty and thirty years old. She would have considered herself insulted, if any one had doubted her modesty and sense of propriety. Yet she told this story with perfect *unconsciousness* that there was any thing disgusting or shocking, or even wrong, in one woman's trafficking away another, under such circumstances! That such a thing could be *done* in a free and Christian community, is sufficiently strange; but that it could be *told of* without the *least shame*, or the slightest consciousness that it *ought* to excite shame, is still more extraordinary.

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